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1650.

ADVICE

Against

LIBERTINISM;

Shewing the great Danger
thereof, and exhorting all
to Zeal of the

TRUTH.

Written by *Edward Reynell Esq.*

*You have been called unto Liberty, only
use not Liberty for an occasion to
the flesh, Gal. 5. 13.*

And L O N D O N,

Printed for *Abel Roper*, at the Sun
in Fleet-street, over against Saint
Dunstons Church, 1659.

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IT is not the least of miseries (in these erroneous and licentious times) to see the thoughts and studies of men taken up for the most part in needless questions (tending onely to strife and contention) and not to that *unum necessarium*, viz. the knowledge of *Christ*, and the cementing of his seamless coat, which

which was never so much (and is still more then other) divided, through dissenting (I might say distracted) *opinions*; the most part also bending (like reeds) with every wind of giddiness and self-interest; a Religious stedfastness to sound and fixed principles, being *rara avis* in these times of change and backsliding.

And with how much tenderness and grief of heart, must it needs be resented, to see *Christ* persecuted in the name of *Christ*; his Word, Ordinances, and Ministers to be so much reviled, and wounded in the house of his seeming friends, and that our own swords should thus devour our Prophets! *Jer. 2. 30.* And truly great reason have all those who have found God under a constant and painful Ministry, to be sad thereat, seeing they thus prophesie in sack-cloth, under a general unflexibleness, and the

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the great contempt and scorn of their calling.

A sad principle is taken up amongst us, that we must have liberty of conscience, to attend on what Teachers or Ordinance we please, under which, some take liberty for their lusts, to attend on none. O how soon having once (with Hymenius and Alexander) made shipwreck of faith, and the means to attain it, shall we make shipwreck of a good conscience with it!

We need not with that famous Orator, *Marcus Antonius*, who to move compassion with the people, brought *Cæsars* Robes all bloody amongst them, much endeavor to manifest the truth hereof; and what further may we expect, from such as thus go headlong on, with a prejudicate opinion, and (resolving to admit neither debate nor gain-saying) rashly adventure the precipice of their own fancy and endless Chi-

mera's, so often as the tide of novelties and giddiness, shall ebb and flow in their unsettled thoughts & obstinacy also being like dead flesh, which soon makes the green wound of an error fester into the sore of an *Heresie*.

Never was there such a general defection of *Religion*, as now it seems most pretended, and held forth; such general *vitiousness*, growth of *Schismes*, falseness in *profession*; yea such indifferency therein, without any true warmth, or holy fire of zeal and godliness.

If any new *doctrine* be but commenced, the *Author* thereof must be thought *Religious*; And so backward are we to follow the Sun of Righteousness, as that (if in a dark night) an *Ignis fatuus* do but precede us, or the mists of error and ignorance come athwart us; how do their glaring flames amaze
our

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our eyes; as if those *false lights* were design'd on purpose to be our pathes; whereas their *Rayes* lead us onely into into Rivers and precipices!

And doth not almost every hours experience shew, how apt we are to embrace their discourses, whose doctrine creeps, and corrodes like a Cancer, and hath justly driven themselves from the communion of the Church? who steal into the affections of the ignorant with small, humble, and modest beginnings, catch with flattery, binde gently, and at last kill privily; their out-side of devotion (though oftentimes outshinning a sincere *Christian*) being but an ill bait to entice us into the nets of *holiness* and good discipline:

Since the more we appear for God, the worse we are, if we be not that indeed which we appear to be: There is more danger of the

Wolfe in the *Lambs* skin, then in his own; when once we begin to nauseate at old *Truths*, and (like flies about a candle) to play about *new lights*, its a thousand to one but we singe our wings, if we burn not our selves. Those that observe the story of the Eastern *Churches*; do alledge this as the great provocation of Gods wrath to bring upon them the blasphemous doctrine of *Mahomet*, because they rejected the wholesome *Truths* of the Gospel. But what need we go further to prove the sad experience hereof, then *Germany*? and God grant it appear not amongst our selves, the same flames of evil *Doctrine* having unhappily broken out amongst us, by those who (as if they had been the spawn of those *Gnosticks* in the Apostles time) account no sin of power enough to defile them, because they were τῇ φύσει πνευματικοὶ, by nature spiritual. Some there are, who

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who leading *silly women* captive, serve their ends upon the impotency of the *S.x*, mixing scandal with their *heresie*. Others there are, who having surprised their will, and possess their understanding with fair *pretences* of their false doctrine (our nature being too apte to believe what we have a minde to) presently conclude it *Orthodox*, because spreading; like *icterical eyes*, transmitting the *species* to the *soul* with *colours* of their own making; and we find the most pleasing doctrine to be ever the most *taking*; it being the weakness of the *Organ*, which thus makes us *blear-eyed*, and carries us headlong into the *Precipice* of our corrupt *humors*; wherein every man is so subject to hug his own *opinion*, to hold his hand between the *Sun* and his face, and yet stand staring upon every *meteor*, and inflamed *Comet*.

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And

And are there not *ſome* who (having their *zeal* kindled at the wrong end, and like nothing ſo well as that which goeth croſs to the grain of *Authority*) when they are looked on, will ſeem to act virtue, with much pompouſneſs, and outward bravery, but when the *Theatre* is empty, will put off their upper garment, and retire into their primitive vileness? Are there not ſome (ſad *Chriſtians*) benighted in the dark intereſt of covetouſneſs, and *ambition*, which too often heighten and ſerue up an external *zeal*, by the wooden pins of worldly reſpects, and make no more account of *Religion*, then the profit or convenience it brings with it?

Thus any thing ſeems lawful enough to ſome men, that ſerves the *ends* of their *ambition*; who yet are ſcrupulous enough in caſes of conſcience, when nothing of *interreſt* doth intervene; ſo ſadly do evil men
in

in these dayes, make Religion the servant of interest; their designs being therefore the fouler, by how much the more they need to put on a fair out-side.

But herein (it being bad sinning in a Religious habit) we ought not to frame our *devotions* to their pattern, how specious so ever they may seem to be, according to the model of their own *fancies*; these being but the colours of Religion, with which the world is too often deceived, by those who cover their Religion with a remote *design*, lest it should appear unhandsome in its own dress.

Our understandings being once clouded with bodily pleasures thickened and become wholly unable for things divine. And we may rest assured, that those whose designs under pretext of Religion, seek nothing but the advancement of their Temporal affairs, and whose goodly

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against Libertinism. 9

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ly humane *Policy* (admitting *Religion* according to the times, and their own *fancies*) makes use of God as a mask for their wickedness, will at last prove no other then a stroke of *Thunder*, which leaves nothing on earth behind it but noise and stench.

Were it not madness then to pass through a garden of fair *flowers*, and to take their *poysen*, and leave their *honey*? Surely *Manna* it self turns into worms, and the wine of *Angels* into vinegar and lees, when it is received into impure *vessels*; healthful medicines (if abused) by the incapacities of a healthless body, often increase the distemperature, from indisposition, to a sharpe disease; and shall we then call that the spirit of prophesying, which is the spirit of lying; and those things to be *Revelations*, which are nothing but meer *dreams*, and the fond productions of *Hypochondriacal* devotion?

Yea

Yea how many absurd *fancies* coming in the likeness of *visions*, and under pretence of *raptures* do we meet with, even from those (the Sun it self producing *serpents* when it reflects on the mud of *Ni-lus*) who seem to have been long softened under the continual droppings of the word? though at last, all ends in pride or some dangerous temptation; self-conceit having also been not the least *rise* of such fond and unheard of productions. It being a sure rule, that whatsoever heights of *piety* any one pretends to, it proceeds from the devil, unless the greater the pretence be, the greater be the humility of the man, it being no Paradox to him that said, *Satan had more ado to win the simple then the subtle*; the worldly wise being sooner enraged then won by the Ministry of the word, which crosses the contentments of the world; neither is pride the least strata-

stratagem of hell, to keep the people from profitableness under the *Ministry* of the word, though one of the mighty methods of Satan, to perswade them to charge the cause anywhere, then (where they ought) on their own heart.

And may we not have just cause, to question and suspect the variety of those dispensations, groundlessly (through too much confidence appropriated by distempered *fancies*) since shaking off those excellent patterns of truth and sincerity in *Religion*, and deviating from those paths which God hath graciously chalkt out unto us in his Word and *Ministry*, for his Saints to walk in, there being no other course (whatsoever they mean by Gods revealing himself) I mean not what he can extraordinarily do, but in his usual way) then by those saving *Truths*, so much now oppos'd, and under-reproach, and the dispensers there-
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of accounted a burthen fit to be ejected.

Surely a constant Travellers pace over-takes, and out-goes many violent men, whose hot and ill-grounded zeal, is quickly tired; these times affording too many ignorant Artists, whose zeal hath been too blind to go right, yet too active to stand still; and however the wrinkles of their spreading *errors*, were far better confessed then painted, had much rather shelter themselves under the bramble of *division*, then the Olive of *peace*, whose swarthinness we need not light a candle to discover. Those that forsake the good old way, to walk in the paths of their own crooked *fancies*, seldom meet (at leastwise with good) company. And may not God leave such as clash with his Word and *Ordinances*, to loose themselves in the dark corners of their own *delusions*; yea take from them the true
lights,

light, they thrust from themselves, in forsaking the fountain of *living waters*, and hewing out broken cisterns to themselves? may he not suffer those who scorn to strike the sails of their own wills and interest to his sacred *truth*, and refuse to eat of the plain food of his word, to be choaked with the bones of their own *inventions*?

And oh with what eye of patience can we behold the verities and maxims of God, which the Prophets foretold us, the Apostles denounced, the Confessors professed, and so many thousands of *Martyrs* have maintained, in the midst of their flames, their racks, and tortures, to be now adayes made the sport of *giddy spirits*, and the aim, and reproach of profane Lips, who void of wit or shame thus invade *Holy things*!

Surely if our opinion so often deceive us, as that we discern little or
no-

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nothing a right; if all the perfections of this life have some imperfections mixed with them, yea no knowledge of ours is void of darkness and ignorance (the humble abasement of our selves, being only the securest way to heaven) how ought we to beware of those, who thus brave it in the shops, when there is little in the ware-house, holding out gaudy fairings, the better to colour inward falsities, and suborn the truth; the Sun whereof being once set in our land, an irrecoverable midnight of spiritual darkness, must needs succeed? If we loose our estates, we may recover them; if we loose our friends, God can raise us up others; if we loose our lives, we may exchange them for a better; but if we once make shipwreck of the faith, we are lost for ever.

And may it not be fear'd that the distempered *fancies*, and the precipitate headlong *discourses*, now on foot

foot (to the infamous reproach of this age, being so full of errors and factious spirits, instead of sound and Orthodox *teachings*, as might much rather have invited silence than our late contentions) and the too much mingling of humane interests with Religion (all being but like the Winters Sun, which shines clear, but warms not) will at last rend the seamless coat of the Church, and deface the Image which Christ hath stamped upon it; making Christian Religion another thing then what he design'd it to be; when it is so far from making us live good lives, that it self is made a pretence to all manner of impiety, and a stratagem to serve the ends of covetousness, ambition, and revenge.

And O how great is the vanity of those, who have thus so-faken God, to serve their own ends! and the more, seeing they pretend to be *Saints*, before they have put off the

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in the Temple, and (with *Simon Magus*, and the Pharisees) appear the fouler for being cleansed. Too often is the crime aggravated by the incivility of the circumstance; and (as *Ahasuerus* said of *Haman*, *Will he ravish the Queen in my own house?*) the place of Gods worship, made the receptacle of buyers and sellers, there being not a few now a dayes, who thus kiss a danger, under a design of vertue, and for their own advantage, hug an opportunity of sin under pretence of piety.

Yea, how sad it is to see those who pretend themselves to be the onely friends of the Church, so violently to affect the rich and pompous Revenues, and Prelacies, which they seem eagerly to oppose, and not onely (like those Ecclesiasticks in Saint *Bernards* time, who pursued their own preferment, not the peoples welfare, and (like usurping Conquerors) grow revengfully jealous, through,

through covertness, polluting themselves with the puddles of this world, but (like those vipers who eat out the womb of their Mother) bring beasts into the Temple, and as well expose the Temple it self to sale, as make the holy Rites thereunto belonging, venial, and destructive.

God in deed (who loves those dearest whom he corrects) may for a time suffer his sword to be abused, and the wicked to cover their pernicious designs, under the cloak of Religion, and the mask of hypocrisie. But surely, such as make but a Politick Robe of Religion, and take the liberty to embrace that which best becomes their occasions, will at last appear (however they take upon them to sit in the chair of Divinity, and how great a noise soever they make, as the sons of thunder) not to have been educated in the Schools of the Prophets.

It is vain for him to seek to fence himself without, whose foe is within him; or to make the pretence of piety the pander to his own prophaness. It is well known, that the mind too often covers passion under a cloak of several colours. The weeping of an heir, is but laughing under a disguise; and the greatest number of our actions but veil'd over with dissimulation, which an all-seeing providence will at last, no doubt, as well discover, as punish; since he that thus leaps from Religion to hypocrisie, and thereby offends others to defend himself, serves not God, but makes God serve his own turn; neither is sacrilege, which hath of late found so fine a dress, and seems to bear the greatest splendor amongst many sins, the way to keep our purposes from canker, or our stomachs from windiness; since it usually makes a fair estate to evaporate, and turn to nothing; no
one

one knows which way ; onely experience tells us, that vice often time gets money and a curse withall ; being also Gods intent to teach us, that as the good have something else to hope for, so the wicked something else to fear, then the good or bad fortune of this world.

It is not denied, but that some who have been fattened up with the Altar, have many times been enemies of the Altar. But What? If some one abuse Mysteries, must we overthrow Churches? Must Ordinances, Ministers, Maintenance, and all be eradicated? What if some evil spirits grow superstitious, must we fall into the other *extrem* of *Libertinism*? Must innocency be forsaken for the guilties sake? If some particulars introduce exorbitant devotions, let them be blamed, condemned, and rejected, none will undertake to defend or justify them.

But

But surely as they are bad clouds which thus obscure the Sun which raised them, and have as the Apostle saith [if ever] begotten them to the faith, so are they spirits of a very poor inferior order, that thus quit their station upon discontents, being but the Apes of those melancholy Schismatics, who (having burnt off their own Fingers, in setting the world on fire) are now slain out with it because they cannot rule it.

And truly, great care must be taken, least we prostitute our souls to these false Gods of straw and dung, and for a tuneable cadence of a few smooth words, we lose all the harmonies of faith and a good conscience; since from the opinion of their own abilities, they cry down the houses of Gods worship, and the maintenance thereof, the better to make way to their own purposes, yea take upon them to censure all

Eccle-

Ecclesiastical Persons as needlesse, if not *Antichristian*; not seeing that the contempt of *Religion* alwayes began by the contempt of the *Ministry*.

And it is to be feared, that some who of late have built their own houses at the expence of Gods house, will in time find the *Rafters* and *Beams* of such *Edifices*, to serve as instruments of punishment to those that have raised them; loth I am (I confess) to judge uncharitably of those, who in seeming thus to avoid *superstition*, have created *devotions* to themselves, which incline thereunto; yet much fear that such, as by this way think to touch heaven with their finger, have already one foot in the vale of darkness.

Neither would I willingly soyl the purity of my pen with the exorbitancies of those, who neglecting pious presidents, and the essential

maxims

maxims of faith, adhere to the silly inventions of their own spirit, and as speedily run into those follies which hasten unto the heighth of insolency and destruction.

For, Great God! what a stroak of Thunder is this to reformed *Churches*? what astonishment in all orders, what a wound in the heart of Religion, to see thy *Laborers* cast out of thy vine-yard, their maintenance questioned [or at least repiningly afforded] and the places of thy worship wholly extirpated? Alas! that ever men should so carry on their own interests, with such violence of passion, to the heighth of their pretentions, as to hold Religion, and the beauty thereof in so great contempt, without the least seeming touch of sorrow or repentance!

And no less reason have they who have of late rent the *Church* into so many *Schismes*, by fraught-
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ing its ship (like that of *Jonah*) with a miscelany of all Nations, and making it to contain, as many Religions, as once *Babel* did languages, to cry out with *Nero* (that lively Image of cruelty) when he was required to sign the death of a criminal offender; O would to God I could never have written! And oh that I could say unto those as once *Peter* did to the people, *I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your Rulers.*

But alas, how soon have some forgotten their first love towards the *Embassadors* of God, by whom [it ever] they were begotten in the Lord! If any thing go amiss with the people, *Aaron* must be stoned. How sadly doth *Ismael's*, as well as *Eſau's* persecution (or is & plague, that of the tongue as well as the hand) appear amongst them! The devil seem'd something merciful to our Saviour, he would not have him starve.

starve but to turn stones into bread, while some of late, lesse charitable, would have the faithful and Orthodox *Ministers* of the Church of God to live upon stones, instead of bread; but it is no wonder that they who once made the *Lords day* a delight unto them, and saw beauty in the feet of those who brought the glad tidings of peace, and flock't like Doves to the holes of the windows (having since questioned whether it be the *Lords Ordinance*, or mans, and endeavour'd as much as in them lay, to make the ways of *Sion* to mourn, and to stop the passengers thereof) should account their *Ministers* a charge and burthen in their places.

However let not those of the holy calling, be troubled who stand idle in the Market place, because no man hath hired them, seeing their sufferings can no way be counted their fault, it being as dangerous a perse-

cution of *Religion* to with-draw the fewel from it, as to cast water on it. And how much were it to be wish't that the two-edged sword of those who give out, as if heaven and not they, had intended the partition, did not cut more for their own preferment and advantage, than for **Gods** glory, though like greedy gamesters (having all in their hand) they lose all at last, by stealing a needless card, it being no easie matter to reduce *divine things* to our own ballance, so as they suffer no impeachment.

Religion and Sacrifice had their beginning from the worlds infancy, and have by an indivisible tye, been evermore linked together. God who giveth all to us, will have us give all to him, though especially he require our actions, our affections, & our selves in the duties of his service. And sure where we cannot give the whole Tree, with such perfection, as
we

we would, yet at least let us argue our willingness by giving part of the fruit to his glory.

But how soon will those, who have once lost their understanding and conscience, find a beaten path to infidelity! How soon will they cut and mangle things relating to the furtherance and honor of Gods truths, and the Oeconomy of Religion! It having been an old maxime (if not dotage) amongst obsequious spirits (having no zeal for faith, nor courage against impiety) to approve all Religions, and follow none. And certainly, he that shall go about to define this false *liberty* of belief, and manners now adayes crept in among us, shall find it nothing else, but a meer dependance on fancy and passion: It is (saith one) a strange *Monster*, whereof it seems *Job* (*Job* 40.) made discription, under the figure of *Behemoth*. For as this creature seems composed

of all sorts of *beasts*, so is *Libertinisme* a sin framed out of all manner of *sin*s, to annihilate the most sincere part of *Christianity*. It draws along with it, a great train of vices, and corruptions, which tend directly to the utter desolation of *Kingdoms* and *Empires*. And as for those hideous punishments observed in all Ages to have befallen those Cities, Provinces, and Commonwealths, which have bred, or favoured it, such as have run over the Histories of Antiquity, shall find experiences enough.

Neither can we possibly believe that *devotion* to be good, which is so extremely subject to *novelties*, singularities, and pride, which proceeds from a foolish confidence of our own judgement. It being well known to all, that the most fatal plague in Religion, and devotion, is the desire to seek direction from our own strength, and opinion; men
that

that are easily enflamed in matters of Religion, fail not as speedily to raise sedition. Most strange! that we should thus miserably lose our selves in the *ignis fatuus* of our own *fancies*, and that (though we cannot reform a silly flie in the work of nature) we will yet frame a new work of Religion, which derives its accomplishment onely from God.

And what is this but to make a *Roman Pantheon* of Religion, where there are a thousand *Divinities*, without the least glimmer, or knowledge of the true God? And is it not a pitiful thing to see some in our times, professing Religion, to take the same *liberty* to themselves? or is it not a thing most unhansome, to see an infamous fellow, to make himself the censurer of *Divinity*, and corrector of the Scripture? doth it become them to talk of the Bible, and the holy *Mysteries* there-

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of [too sadly oftentimes wrested by that blasphemous breath, which holds forth nothing so much as ignorance, scoffing, and sycophancy, from which we ought to shut our ears, if we cannot stop their mouths?]

It is observed of the *Bat*, that he imployes the *Christalline* humor of his eyes to enlarge his wings, though very useless, and to no purpose; so how many are there now a dayes, who consume the *light* they have received from God to create wings of pride, novelty, and vanity, which serve them to flie in the night of ignorance?

And O the sad opinions of our *Times*! which (wandering from the *Rays* of wholesome *Doctrine*) prove but the *Chymeraes* of piety, *Spectres* of madnesse, and flames which lead poore soules into the *Abyssse* of darknesse! What alas! may we (with

* *Ter-*

* *Tertullian*) con-
clude such illusions,
and *Phantasmes*, but
as the doctrines of
Satan, grown up to
please the itch of in-
credulous ears? since they more
tend to dazel our *sight*, than to di-
rect our *judgement*, or inflame our
desires.

* *Doctrina pru-
rientibus auri-
bus nata. Ter-
tul. de Pre-
script.*

There are many things (I confess)
unknawn, wherein God will exer-
cise our faith, but not satisfie our
curiosity, and we still ought to en-
deavor a clearer discovery of his
will. Nothing in all *Ages* hath
been so hidden as *Truth*. The Phi-
losophers (those great *lamps* of na-
ture) contended much in the dis-
section and defence thereof, but
much dismembred it in the ill hand-
ling thereof, leaving it in cloudy
Caverns, all covered with shades
and darkness, and in stead of a solid
body retained nought in their hands

but a *Phantasm*. But though blind-
ed man, infected with the immortal
disease of incredulity, hath Giant-
like persecuted it through contradi-
ction and vanity of spirit, God a-
lone through his infinite goodness,
hath been the discoverer there-
of.

And sure it were but fondnesse to
think, that in the declining Age of
the world, the way to heaven were
yet to seek, since the eternal wis-
dom hath taken lips of flesh to re-
veal the secrets thereof unto us ;
how furiously soever his divine *Ora-
cles* have been assaulted on all hands,
by Jews, Gentiles, Mahumetans,
Hereticks, to which we may adde
the *Libertines* of our *Times*, of
whom we may justly doubt, least
their secure ambition prove no o-
ther then *Archimedes* his Engine,
whereon the higher any mounted,
the lower they descended,

Yea good reason have we to doubt (since they that will never fall, must ever fear) least that pride, which perpetually exalts them, will (through giddinesse) at last, precipitate them into the Abyſſe of those *fantasies*, which they have meerly borrowed from their shallow inventions, and which they too often entitle (through the sottish apprehensions of their mind) with the name of *visions* and *revelations*, which may be refuted with as much ease as they are invented, seeing that they carry with them but the bare and feeble pretext of *Religion*, neglecting the effects.

Neither is it credible that *Truth* should be so long hidden, to be discovered to such kind of men as seek to sow such dangerous *maxims* in our mind; creatures of little Authority, evil manners, of a conversation insolent, or covert, and without that sanctity, miracles, and rea-
son

son, they so much plead for. And surely, we stand not in need of such kind of curiosity, to seek after *Jesus Christ*, or to search for the Gospel. The Apostle Saint *Paul* expressly telling us, That if an *Angel from heaven should preach any other unto us, we ought to change nothing of our belief*, which so many millions of *Martyrs* have sealed with their blood; which the best part of mankind hath professed, and the wisest heads of the world illustrated in their writings.

Our *Faith* is not grounded upon wit, discourse, or natural judgement, but on the submission and duty we owe to the Truths and Ordinances of God; from which, whosoever wandereth shall finde nothing but an *Ocean* of disturbances, and the shipwrack of his *Faith*, which he ought not to abandon to a *Caitive spirit*, which hath nothing specious in it but illusion.

There

There is but one Redeemer, to whom we all owe our services and adorations. *Iesus* hath nothing to do with *Belial*, nor the temple of God with the Synagogue of Satan. And however *lyes* may for a time, seem to accord together, yet true Religion is ever sound in it self; and to approve any other (though seemingly never so reasonable) is but to thrust thorns into the feet, and straws into the eyes; neither will it seem any strange thing, that those who seek their contentments, and the pleasing of their *fancies*, in the contempt of God and his *Ordinances*, should at last make up but a bad reckoning, pricking their fingers whilst they are gathering of *Roses*, and meeting with worm-wood in the midst of *Honey*.

And yet (though God be never so great as when he appeareth little to humane understanding) how sadly do we find haughtiness & arrogancy
to

to have puffed up many (through their small smattering of gifts) with the opinion of their own capacity? They think themselves onely to pronounce oracles, and judge all other men to consist of superstitions and ideotisme. The Fathers are entertained like Grooms in their Stables. Points of Logick, profoundnesse in the Scriptures, reading of Councils, with the knowledge of things natural, are no way thought worthy their better thoughts.

I deny not, but as that which is given us by the favour of Heaven, comes very readily, and is never lost; so that which comes to us by Art, oftentimes begins very late and quickly ends [the love of God being a science not studied, where the infusion of his holy spirit is more eloquent then all tongues, and more learned then all pens] yet doth it not hence follow, that all humane learning is to be rejected. Though
Saint

Saint Paul desired to know nothing but Jesus Christ, yet did he not contemne all other knowledge and humane learning in Arts and Sciences, wherein himself was so accomplish'd, being the great Doctor of the Gentiles, and could speak tongues more than they all, he onely disliked it so far as it stood in opposition against, or in competition with the knowledge of Christ.

And it would be of great moment, to the greatest interest of these mens souls, if they would but make so much use of their natural Logick, as to detect those fallacies which are put upon their reasons, by their passionate desires, either of profit, or pleasure, or worldly ambition.

Some there are indeed (though the fewest amongst them) who seem to have arived to some perfection in humane Sciences; but alas! How do they vex the world with their rattle! neither will their spirit admit any other

other path, but Precipices : and if a capable man sound these swelling *Rodomantæes*, oh what empty chambers will appear in their brains ! what darknesse ! what confusion ! All their learning is but like gilded gates pestered with spiders, which too usually flights the syllogismes of the Schools, and hath recourse to the arguments of tyrants, which are arms and violence.

But (since the life of opposites is in comparing them) I do not wonder that *learning* (as well as the *professors* thereof) are such great rubs in their way; seeing their ignorance must needs appear thereby to be the more palpable; and their desire is to enter into the fold like *Wolves* in a *Sheeps* skin. They tell the sheep they are much affected to their conversation, but that the dogs must be taken away, which do nothing but deafen their ears with barking.

They

They would willingly make you believe, the mire of their ignorance to be sweet, because they delight to rumble in it; or that the Spider or Toad are no poyson, because some things eat them, and miscarry not, though the beam in their eye is not the less because their eye doth not see it; nor is their ignorance the less, their punishment, because they are affected with it. But seeing it is thus too often the imperfection of our nature, not to think our lips foul after our putrid and rotten discourse (though they are defiled) as we ought to desire God to set a watch before the door of our own lips, least we should offend with our tongue; so should we very cautelous, and with *Vlysses*, binde our selves to the mast, and stop our ears with wax least we should be deceived with the voice of these *Syrens*, not beholding their claws.

It is reported of *Democritus*, that he

he voluntarily made himself blind, by looking stedfastly on the beams of the *Sun*, to free himself from the importunity of the love of women, who might perchance have shut up two gates against love, to open a thousand to his fond imagination. (*Tertul. Apologet.*) And the like we read of *Origen*, that he deprived himself of the distinction of *Sex*, to rebate the stings of sensuality, which bred him much mischief. Surely no less reason have we not only to fear the fire, but avoid the smok of those incendiaries, which (like *Sampsons Foxes*) have of late added such flames towards the divisions of Church and State.

Yea, how necessary is it for us to come out from amongst those creeping Serpents, which steal into the hearts of those they destroy? and which (like certain rocks hidden under the waves) surprize Sailors, and cause grievous ship-wracks. Ah!

how

how many have been deceived by their impostures? How many having once made ship-wrack of their *Reason*, have thereunto added the ship-wrack of their *Faith*? the swelling presumption of their imaginary abilities, creating a barrenness of judgement, discretion, humility, and consequently of all Christian vertues.

In all which respects, they that will but a little observe their inconstancy, having no other bounds but their own interest, and like weather-cocks, turning their faces which way soever the wind blows; he that observeth that *pride* which puffeth them up, that *ambition* which precipitaterh them, and how often *impudence* makes them unsupportable, shall find them people whose humors consist much of air and water, pliant and supple to all manner of Doctrines, and attended with variety of petty *phantasmes*,
im-

imperfect in shape, and not a little transporting their judgement which too often also (through the sharpnesse of their Passions) discovers it self either notably weak, or much benumbed; their whole life appearing nothing else, but the ebb and flood of a continuall *Exripsis*, replenished with shadows, giddinesse, and illusions.

I shall not be so uncharitable, as some have been (who with much more discrecion might have covered the stains of their mother the Church, then with such malignity of spirit to divulge them) to impute the disorders of particulars to the general body; it being neither fit, nor reasonable for the sake of some blasted *members*, to blame sound parts, neither for the ficklenesse of some, to censure the Actions of many more *pious*, whom by duty we are obliged to tender with no lesse prudence then charinesse.

But

But I shall passe them by (as Bees
over Hemlock) with advice onely to
all such as have thus far taken *Scor-*
pions in stead of good fish, and
embraced *Hyana's* through mistake
of friends, seriously to consider,
that as there is nothing more sincere
than *Religion*, and one that liveth
in the true Rules and *duties* thereof;
so when corruption falls thereinto,
nothing proves more dangerous and
hurtful. And as Domestick Armes
are much more to be feared than
outward Hostility; so who sees not,
but that being now in the haven,
surprized with a grievous storm of
Sects, and *Errors* amongst our selves,
it must not onely snatch from us our
comfort, but (like ill managed wea-
pons) turn against our own breast,
to the rending out of our own en-
trails; yea, even to the very subver-
sion of our souls! since our di-
visions are so much the more
dangerous beyond common wars,

as the Spirit is above the Body.

He that endeavoreth to divide Religion, hath none at all. He that admitteth but one leak, drowns a ship, and he that resolves to believe but a part, and not the whole, believes nothing, since all comes from the same Authority, and must be equally received. There is but one word (saith *Tertullian*, *Tert. de Praescript. cont. Hares.*) to determine all sort of disputations with such men. Do but ask them, whither they will renounce their Baptisme and Christianity; if so, let them wear the Turbant, and go amongst the heathen. But if they make profession of one same *Christ*, and one same *Religion*, why do they belye their profession?

But surely *Art* will not, it is onely *Grace*, and the gift of God, which can charm such *Basilisks*, being creatures amongst all others, hard

hard to be enchanted. It is only a divine light and guidance, which must direct those who thus lose their faith in their Reason, and bury their heart in their brains, who have recourse to their own fancies, more than to the divine oracles of that written word inspired from heaven, who think the Ministers thereof Antichristian, or at least wise (since differing with them) to be too strait-laced in their opinions, and making the way to heaven narrower than God ever meant it: who (to be eminent amongst men) leave the beaten tract, neglecting the good old way, and to guide their steps by the dim *lanthorns* (as they call them) of the Antient, tread in the *new paths* of their own inventions; who think to pretend Religion, is to do any thing; to seem holy, is to be what we will, there being no face so foul, which that mask cannot cleanly colour; who, because

cause they think themselves more holy, more wise, better gifted, more enlightened than their neighbors, think they may justly over-look them with contempt and censure, and not onely in publike meetings, but in ordinary conversation, avoid the contagion of such common breath. And however the zeal of some scrupulous Preachers (as they say) is pleas'd to make the worst of their slips, yet have they certain favourable circumstances, if not wholly to excuse them, yet sufficiently to rebate the edge of divine severity.

Let us take then the ballance in our hand, and judge if it be not worse then a barbarous ingratitude, thus to worship our own fancies; to steal the silver and gold of God, and make idols to *Baal*; to light our lamp at his Altar, and afterwards to make pillage of his Temple, which assuredly they do, when they

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they not onely pride themselves in their shame, but abuse all the gifts of heaven in ambitious impiety.

It was good advice which one gave to a soul desirous of advancement; namely, to remember three things.

First, To addict it self much to the presence of God.

The second, To take the holy Scripture for the rule of our actions.

And the *third*, to hold firm footing in constancy.

Would those who pretend themselves the most refined spirits of the times (whose mouths and hearts notwithstanding resemble Cyclope-Caverns, rather than the Temples of Peace and Truth) would those (I say) who make the smoothness of their tongue an Engine to credit their designs, and with *Abolom* cover their Rebellion with a
C fit

fit of devotion to pay their vows, but seriously consider those few advertisements, they would not so often personate the *Saint* to play the *devil*; neither make their good words so often to become their *fin*s.

Would they who (being no way washed from their own leprosie) puddle the sacred springs of wholesome doctrine, and like *Sorcerers*, endeavor to cast mists on the fairest morning, but bethink themselves, if *Nadab* and *Abihu* for putting false fire into their Incensories when they came to the Altar of the Synagogue, were devoured as unfortunate Victims, with the proper coals of their own Sacrifice; what will become of them who adore Christ to crucifie him in his *Truths*, and who thus irreverently presume to approach the Altar of the eternal Testament? will not their sacrifice prove their punishment, since they have

have made a sin of their propitiation? And as profane victories ill disciplined, bring with them more damage: then defeatments do, will not those divine *Mysteries* (which were formerly beheld clouded in darkness, but are now more apparently observed in a clear sky) occasion their greater ruine, who under so glorious a Sun-shine thus turn *perjury* into scoffs, and retain nothing of it but a *Phantasme*, to serve their own ends, and to lacquay in their vile affections?

Would those who seem to breathe nothing but *Stoicism* and spiritual-mindedness, who bear a vicious mind in a fair ornament of body, and cover a leaden weapon in an Ivory sheath, but seriously consider, that to be godly is to be honest, and to be pious is to be just (godliness and honesty, being divine in conjunction, but (divided from one another) are most abominable things)

things) would they I say with their *Janus* faces, think they can worship God, so long as they hate, and prove false to their *neighbor*, whom they may plunder in love, and persecute their body to save their souls? Who observeth not that those men who thus stray from the Rules of heavenly wisdom, precipitate themselves into devious enormitie, and caliginous observations? such spirits being willing to be found anywhere than where they may observe Christian *duties*. Devotion, Temperance, Christian Charity, and other virtues, are not now accounted of in the souls of such dissolute *Libertines*; as if the bare reputation of being devout, might draw upon it some suspicion of weaknesse: yea, how many now adays are troubled, that nature hath not made them impudent enough to shake off the sting of a good conscience, as if hell were no other then in picture with them?

Nor

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Nor could it otherwise be that so many uncollected spirits now a days [as if they would frame the whole work of Religion to their own humor] should make it their glory to act all against the hair, to oppose the most sound opinions, and to give the lye even to heaven it self; yea as if they were so many *Archimedes*, who seek for a place out of the world to set foot in, of purpose to turn the world topsie turvey; it would not be that so many hideous monsters of heresies, of impiety and Atheism, should so uncontrollably throw forth Blasphemies against Religion,

And doth not Religion, and the glory of God herein suffer diminution? doth not our Nation labor under general convulsions? Hath it not been wasted through unheard of lacerations? Is it not (I say) through the terrible and monstrous spreadings of *Atheism*, and self-

will'd *opinions* under which the Church of God now laboreth, and the oppressive sighs of a mourning people are almost tired out with tedious disappointments?

Surely, he that sees the Church of God [once glorious, and triumphing] to be now so full of rubbish and deformity; he that sees her now complaining, bedew'd with tears, sitting in the dust, and almost drown'd in cares and sorrows, must needs cry out with the Prophet (*Lam. i. i.*) *How doth the City sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the Nations, and Princess among the Provinces, how is she become tributary?*

All that is just, prudent, and moderate, now tasteth too much of common; other paths must be found to heaven, new ways must be cut out from God under the mould of our own Fancy, to make him known in

to us; every one thinking that opinion most probable which he hath taken upon byasse of his own understanding.

And hence is it that so often we court a *fancy* or body of smock, thinking to entertain a *Truth* having much of affectation, but least of effect, since we tie our selves to a rotten *branch*, in stead of adhering to the body of the *Tree*. Hence is it that we see so many in the seemings of affected Piety, who so well act all countenances, as if with such merchandize Paradise were to be purchased, being yet in heart like those pearls which in stead of a solid body have nothing but the husk.

And is it not from this that so many take devotion as a slight pastime? others but as a slight complement, that some bend that way for complacency of humors; others for vain-glory, yea, too many are thereto transported for some slender

Slender cloak of liberty, and certain accommodations of their proper interest, expressing an unseemly devotion of Apish tricks, which consist in a certain light, and childish imitation of countenances and gestures without any solidity in the interior?

Oprodigy! now adays to see so many, who are only bold to do ill, but in undertakings made for God and his truth, have hearts of wax, and souls trembling like leaves under the breath of windes! As there is almost nothing so pittiful as a Prince disarmed (who serves onely as a But to reproaches, and a sport to insolency) so what Rock would not be mollified among so many di eful objects? what eye of ice would not melt among so many spectacles of sadness, to behold God disroabed of his Honor, his Truths, his Ordinances, by those who being drowned in the inundation of impieties, follow him

him by a muddy search, rather than by a clear acquit?

Is not this to betray *Religion*, which of it self, is fair and glorious? And do we not hereby give occasion to exorbitant souls, to justify their sins by our evil deportments, who think that by depainting vice with a coal in another, they make themselves as white as snow? what need we thus go about to entertain ill-grounded fantasies? and as sorceresses darken the glorious eye of the day with their charms to cloud our faith by renouncing the light of truth, by embracing the dusky vapors of our own invention?

Are not the *Truths* of God hitherto held forth unto us sufficient? Why then [by *disentombing* those *Heresies*, which were long since entered] do we draw on us the Character of *Infidels*, which will at last serve us to no other purpose but to reproach us in the eternity of our pains.

pains with the exorbitance of our infamy !

They who adulterate metals, and poison the *sources* of lively *fountains*, do less hurt then those who use their own interest for *Text*, their ignorance for *glosse*, and their passion for *commentary*. Neither do those who desire to establish false things, gain ought else upon the credulity of humane spirits, but to make *Truth* to be the more doubted. For as ill habites are easily made to slide into the hearts of children, by imitation of parents, or corruption of evil company ; so error illaqueates some men, and opinion sets the complexion upon the procedures of the most.

And what is this but to oppose the shadow to the light, and a lye to the truth ? Nay, do we not herein set up *Reason* as Judge, and resolve our *Faith* into *Reason* ? [an error of too many in these dayes.] Do we

not

not give vice the colour of virtue, and keep truth in Iron chains? yea, which is worse, imitate the sorcerers who imploy the Bible to fortifie their enchantments?

Experience hath of late too sadly told us, that there is nothing which so much tempts Curiosity, as Religion from whence it comes, that (as *Jonah's* ship) every one seems to call upon his own God; that the figure so much encroacheth upon the body, and that (like men smitten with blindnesse) we are led into *Samarita*, instead of going to *Dathan*, 2 King. 6. 19.

But where we see any thus pretend to have new instincts towards discoveries, above and beyond Scripture, let us with the Apostle (*Col. 2. 18, 19.*) make it a marke of seducers, to intrude into things they have not seen; and however in the esteem of some they are as eminent as Apostles, or an Angel
of

of God, yet if they once throw aside this glaſs, introducing new and ſtrange Doctrines (though under great humility and ſhews of love) if they go about to cauſe *diviſions*, if they forſake Ordinances, viſible Miniſters, and the old way of holy walking with God, we are bound not to receive, but to avoid them, leaſt we be deceived (as *Adam* was) and loſe that knowledge of God which once we had.

Alas! why ſhould we thus betray the glory of God? why do we thus batter his inheritance? Are not our continued *diviſions* the cauſe that *the wayes to Sion do mourn*, that *her Priests ſigh*, and *ſhe is afflicted*, that *all her beauty is departed*? *her princes are become like Harts that finde no paſture*, and *are gone without ſtrength before the purſuer*, Lament. i. 4. 6. Have not our breaches been the in-
 rode of ſo many licentious enormities? Is it not from the fruitful
 mo-

another of dissensions, that so many impieties and the Authors thereof have increast amongst us, and though not acted by command, yet tolerated by connivance?

What is it else that hath so much obliged the desires, and frustrated the expectations of all men? How comes it that their minds are dejected, and their virtues disheartened? whence comes it that the *Magistry* is so vilipended, the *Mistry* condemn'd, and all things seem perverted? was it not by the too furious marchings of those *Job's*, who at first made way to their ambitious expectations by all designs [either violent or fraudulent] and whose best *lustres* have since proved but a *foil* to Religion, that *piety* languisheth, *Religion* fainteth, that *charity* is accounted scandalous and *superstitious*; that blasphemy assumes the uncontroled liberty of venting, and that the beauty of
Churches

is so disgraced and sullied by facinorous hands?

Falices nimium bona si sua xerint!

How happy had we been, had we learn't rather to *live* than to *dispute*? had the waters of strife, and the floods of contention been dried up, how soon had that *Dove* with silver wings appeared amongst us? Had that charity which is onely infused into us by the spirit of God, but suffocated those super-seminated *Tares* of contentions, how soon would it have cut off the occasions of those inhumane strivings? neither would that black spirit of the *Abyss* have drawn men even from the *Altar*, to run to the *sword*, which they indifferently thrust into the bosom of the nearest *Relations*; after which followed so many cries and lamentations, with such images of death still flying before our eyes, as
were

were able to wound the heart with compassion, yea to move the most unnatural rage.

Hence it is, that the godly evaporate into sighs, and the convulsed world seems to mourn, with the sadness and apprehension of approaching *judgement*. And surely he that now revels it in *greatnesse*, he that sits idle amidst the complaints and mourning of the Church, must needs be infuscated with the sooty vapors of an insensible heart. Yea, hard are those ears which bow not to the sad relation of our long bleeding miseries; and harder those eyes which can behold them without the moist testimonies of sorrow. The Land grieveth for many horrid *sins*; and may we not justly fear, least *Providence* [so often provoked by our renewed trespasses] will cast us out as a *prey* to our enemies, or that the Sun of righteousness may go down in our days?

It

It were to enter into a vast Labyrinth of discourses and reasons to represent at this time those various blatts of pernicious doctrine, exagitated by factious whirlwinds, since we may behold on the stage of the Church such a horrible sphere of Monsters, and Tempests, bloody Comets, and Arms of fire [as the *malignant* of seducing spirits] cherishing so formidable a growth, to abate our hopes, and undermine our happiness.

The highest superspection and vigilancy being therefore now more then ever requisite to preserve that *truth* which God hath espoused to himself, and which we find the devil in all *Ages* to have raised instruments to disparage, discountenance and oppose, yea (it possibly) to over-throw, in the rooting out of the Ministry, and Professors thereof, as being a spiritual Engine to batter down his Kingdom.

Nei-

Neither do the present contrivances of those (who I fear have long deceived the world with a laborious *Hypocrisie*, since under the veil of *Religion* are concealed such flagitious and dangerous *Tenents*) seem to happen by humane designment, but as *Cockatrice* eggs, long since hatching by that old *serpent*, whose kingdom drawing to an end, and having but a short time to reign, there's hopes these spirits and Emissaries (who resemble the wooden Dove of *Archytas* the Philosopher, which flew by engines, whilst they had their operation, and soared in the air, but so soon as they ceased, it trailed the wing on the earth) will not long infect the air with their fuliginous breath.

And that God [who draweth light out of the bottom of darkness, and oftentimes suffereth not things vile to be long lasting: I will (after we have profited by the experience
of

of our evils) disperse those amazing tumults, and prevent the growth of that *Atheism* which everywhere abounds, and threatneth ruine to his *ways*, as if some hidden poison had envaded the land.

All humane affairs are then only seated in the best station of *fel city*, when they rejoyce in concord, piety, and unity of Religion, it being an ill kind of solace for one man to compute his happinesse by the encrease of anothers grief. And most miserable are they of all men, who cannot be happy but by the miseries of another. To what purpose is it to hold *flowers* to the nostrils, when the body is parched and wasted with a violeut *feaver*?

Heat (in the opinion of some) doth more hurt then the North-wind; and stony spirits are not alwayes the most efficacious. And who sees not that our *Protestant* dis-

sensions have ever been the cause of our adversaries rejoycings?

As the sweetest *influences* are those which cause the sweetest effects in total nature; and not sparkling *Flames*, but invisible *heats* usually melt hard metal; so who seeth not that silence and peace (which are the two mansions of a good conscience) are of much more worth, then all the questions which enkindle *divisions*? the best doctrine being that which best knoweth how to cement up concord.

But it hath been our unhappinesse of late that in the great vicissitude of things, evil minds have too often intervened, which vitiated the Councils, retarded the endeavors, and diverted the intentions of such who had a righter aim towards the advancement of the truth, then such as were hurried into arms by a blind violence of spirit [not so much for love of justice as greediness

ness of revenge] and under the vail of *Religion*, labored to hide flagitious and damnable excesses.

[*Casari. in Dialog.*] *Casarius* (a Greek Author) saith, that Mill-stones having no corn to grind, strike fire one on another. And hath not the want of employment, with particular reflections on gain, profit, and preferment, interpos'd dissensions not onely among the neereſt friends, but often times among the *Religions* ?

Against the unnaturalness whereof, we find an eminent example in the magnanimity of *David*, who could scarce be induced to a just resistance of his son *Absalom*, though forcing his way unto his Fathers Throne through blood and rapine, untill *Joab* had dissipated that languidness of his gentle minde. And so detestable an undertaking was it held in those who were brethren by the bonds of Nature and Religion,

to forfeit all civil respects to the rage of war, as that (if we take a review of the old Testament) we shall find though there were many and bitter discords, many tumults, many wars, yet they were ever against those who had collapsed into fout and apparent idolatry, and the worship of the *Gentiles*.

Saint Peter, 1 *Pet.* 3.8. (in whose heart God had locked up the Maxims of the best *Policy* in the world) invites us to be all of one mind, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous. And we find our Saviour in the Prophet *Isaiah* (*Isa.* 11. 1.) to be called a *Rod*, and a *Branch*, to correct some, and to comfort others, but is never termed a *sword* to kill and destroy. Oh that the thoughts hereof would cut off all further occasions of inhumane strivings! did our Saviour after he had triumphed over death salute his disciples with the sweet and amiable name

name of *peace*? Did the Apostles afterwards beautifie the entrance of their Epistles with it? Is it with this that the Angels rejoyce, and just men are delighted? And is it this only which transmits comfort to the weak, ease to the troubled, upon which all wishes are bent, in which all people are blessed? and must it not needs be an *ob eſt* full of bitter anguish to see a Nation worried to ruine by fraternal *discords*, which *Christ* hath espoused by a particular election to himself? What doth it advantage disconsolate man, to be freed from the expectation of a greedy enemy, by being rifled and impoverished by those of his own Nation?

If a watchful eye abides in heaven ever active, never weary, but perpetually contemplates the deeds of men, and equally dispenseth to everyone his deservings [and who sees not that Gods eye is as quicksighted
in

in the discerning of hearts, as his hand is weighty in the chastisements of crimes? | surely it is to be feared that the Iron hand of provoked justice will fall heavy on contentious souls, who pursued others into disorder; since where *Christ* is banished, and love findes no habitation, where (as in the war *Constantinus* raised against *Magnentius*) the Croſſe is opposed [in Arms] against the Croſſe, where Christians (forgetful of their covenant, forgetful of their name, and unmindful of their Relations) thus rage, one against another, there is either no Government, or such as borders upon ruine.

It is observed in History for many Ages, that the wounds from heaven have on all sides fallen on those who have sought to cast the Apple of discord into the house of God; the wind blown from their mouth hath returned on their heads, since it
is

is fit iniquity should first kill itself with its own poison; discords may for a time (indeed) increase with a prodigious fertility, & those thrones which are established upon wickedness, and cemented with blood, may for a time subsist with wickedness (God having appointed rods of his fury for our chastisement) but have they not at last been tortured themselves with those pains and furies which they raised against others? Had it not been better they had put their hands on *Thorns* than on the *Pearls* of a *Diademe*?

God sometimes (indeed) permits darkness to execute its power upon the light, and the impious to persecute the just (who every day drown a part of their life in their *Tears*) to render them the more glorious by their sufferings; but that at last he takes their cause in hand, and overwhelms all humane policy

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policy in a crudity of undigested designs, let a *Julian* witness, whose greater design against *Christian Religion*, being the destroying of Learning, and the subsistence of the *Ministry*, was blasted from heaven in the midst of his blasphemy.

And though men of the same temper, may not meet with the like end, whom God oftentimes makes to die slowly by some strange malady, and more lingering strokes, rendering them the spectators of their own dishonor, and their own funerals [as we see in *Herod, Tiberius*, and others] yet how suddainly have we seen many great ones of the world (luxuriating in their Glories, and made wanton by felicity) dismantled of them both? how often doth the Cypress disappoint the Laurel, and an inconcocted success of fortune obstruct all the glories

D

ries of the conquerer, to whom nothing was once thought wanting but immortality?

How many Conquerours have we seen to stand over the ruins of the oppressed (being themselves wasted by the expence of blood and strength) who have been often nearer their Tombs, then their Triumphs, their Funerals, then their Palms? And (when contemplating the principal object of their delight) have they found any thing to entertain their curiosity, but a forced and unpleasant laughter?

So hard is it to row in the stream of the world, where God conducts not the vessel, whose just anger alwayes follows sinners at the heels, onely waits untill the offering be fat to sacrifice it. When God intends to abandon man for his demerits, and to sacrifice him to his Justice, he leaves him to himself, and to the wishes

wishes of his own heart; he permits him to satiate ambition or revenge; to entangle himself under some great design under the pretence of honor and Justice, and (although he be vicious) gives him successes, and incomparable prosperities, that puff up his heart, and make him presume upon his own conduct; he takes from him the true taste of *divine* things, and (if he have any faithful Councillors) flatterers, and enchanters possess their place. If any evil affright him, or any scourge from heaven overwhelm him, he is made believe it is but a natural thing, untill at last he be put upon the Pinnacle of his highest dignities, and the most magnificent negotiations, which precipitate him into *Archeism*, and a reprobate sense, which is the last step that one makes to enter into hell.

I should not have so much digressed on this subject, but that some hidden poison seems of late to have infected many, and engaged them in blind and unexpected dissensions concerning that great question of *propriety* [so much controverted throughout the world] the which (as *Archefilaus* hath long sythence held forth) is a businessse so perplexed, as never to be determined; being the confusion of things and fortunes, necessarily engendering continually jars and endless disagreements; and that a cruel preparation of mind to revenge, an implacable disposition, a barbarous lust to rebell, a secret speculation of Lordly Dominion, and other such causes have too plainly appeared in those who consider not that it is more easie to raise troubles, then to moderate them.

Neither (indeed) are any way acquainted with the conversation of those, who at the Nativity of our blessed Saviour sang *Anthems of Peace*, which is the greatest and most excellent gift of the divine indulgence, and from which floweth the opulency of Kingdoms, the accumulation of all temporal blessings, and the most active vigor of all functions in the body Politick. Whereas on the contrary, where concord is dissipated, and the Arms of war besiege mens ears (whose ingress is troublesome, the progress doubtful, and the egress for the most part deplorable) there presently insueth a convulsion, and direful decay of all the members; and audacity (finding it self disengaged from the penalties of the Laws) runneth headlong into all variety of mischiefs.

And hence 'tis it, that the streets are often times not onely covered with dead bodies, and the little children fighting out their last breath upon the bleeding carcasses of deceasing Parents, that strangers possesse the heritages, and enrich themselves with the spoils of the ruined and oppressed, but that the Temples have been handled as the object of all reproaches, and those vessels of glory which served for the *Ministry* of the Lord, have been taken away by impiated hands; that the most sacred things are violenced, and the most prophane licenced, the nocent and innocent are involved in the expectation of a sad and promiscuous Catastrophe.

Surely as he would be too much in love with life, to be willing

to

to spare, and keep it in the losse
of the true Religion, so must he
deeds be sorry that ever he entred
into the world, when he consi-
ders the time, to which God had
reserved his Age, to see the dis-
asters and desolation of a place
or people abandoned to the fury of
Rapinous hands, and the prophana-
tion of the impious, to see raven-
ous *Harpys* [fatted with humane
ruines] to rush into those well fea-
thered Nests which they built not;
to see whole Families loaded with
injuries, and the props of build-
ings to tremble with loud *blasphemes*,
yea to behold such fatal
Comets which shall portend no-
thing but fire and sword to Church
and State.

What an Edict do we finde pub-
lished by an Apostle invested with
Thunder, and lightning? 1 Cor. 5. 6.

And were he sent again into the world by Providence, what would he imagine, who then wanted patience to see a controversie [about a field perhaps, or a house] if he should now behold those that claim the title of the faithful, to oppose not a house or City one against another, but even strive to precipitate whole Provinces, yea a Nation into Rapes, disorders, and priviledged Plunders? He that would not suffer *one brother to go to law with another*, but rather *to suffer wrong and sustain fraud*, would he have countenanced such inhumane spectacles, with a Declaration of allowance, as now appear visible in the face of this Age?

And if our Saviour enjoyned a removal of all scandals from his
King-

Kingdom, dooming the Authors thereof to have a Mill-stone hang-
ed about their Necks, and their
bodies cast into the Sea, what
will become of those who through
their own ambitious ends [as if
God were bound to define all
things according to their sense,
and will] fall into division a-
mong themselves, withdraw from
each other, and censure one a-
nother? Wo, and alas! will bre-
thren forgetful of their Cove-
nant, forgetfull of their Name,
and unmindfull of their Relati-
ons, thus rage, contemne, yea
destroy those which they ought
not to hate!

Will not the people, seeing
so many Religions held forth (as
they think) and so many severall
wayes and minds, think it is as
good be of none, as adventure a-
mong

mong so many? What just occasion of offence will hereby be given to the ignorant, to the prophane, and such as are yet unsettled in their judgement, when (either through pride, or petulancy they shall see men change their opinions, which a while ago they seemed to be so zealous for? doth not this make them think that the rest may be as uncertain as those?

Surely, its an extream rage and furious dispair which thus expects nothing but the height of evils for its Remedy; and how great a scandal the Lives of such Professors will at last throw upon the Church of God, I wish the sad experience of the times may not too plainly manifest; many (no doubt) having been kept off from the practice, and approving of a
godly

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godly life , through the unhappy differences among our selves.

But that which is the soul of misfortune , is the great contempt of that high *Calling* ; for which the Apostle *thought none sufficient*. It is not denied but that God can make his Oracles speak without a voice [and Oh what a great thing is nothing in the hands of God, who can teach without a School, and in a moment change ignorants into Doctors and Pesants into Prophets !] But what ? shall we neglect the ordinary means appointed in his word to lead us to him ? What can we expect from a Physitian that discourseth of war , or a bare Scholar treating of the secret designs of Princes ? No more may we look for from those late *Chaplains* of Satans ordering, who pre-

pretend good to do mischief,
and act his part in the attire of
an Angel.

The spirit also is promised to
lead us into all truth, but not by
fanatick *Enthusiasms*. The spi-
rit of God speaks to us in and
by [but not *besides*, or beyond]
the Scripture; to hold therefore
extraordinary *Revelations* [where-
by things were formerly made
known to the Prophets] or to
pretend to immediate inspirations
without the word, is a delusion
as monstrous as detestable, and
ought to be rejected as an instru-
ment of Satan, *2 Thess.* 2. 2. and
as the usual pretences of Impo-
stors, against whose fanatical con-
ceits, God hath sufficiently fore-
warned us, *1 John* 4. 1, *Galathians*
1. 8.

The

The Scripture being written for our learning, we are commanded there to *search*, as the Conduit of Life and power of God unto salvation. Of whom we are not taught to enquire at the *Oracles* of our lusts and Phantasies, nor to be led by *opinions* of our own framing. And surely the punishment of the Mongrel-blasphemer, *Levit. 24.* should make all conscionable men afraid how they adventure this way, to make bold with Gods sacred Name, lest perchance (like the sons of *Sceva*) they meet with some mad devils to whip them from their presumptuous folly.

And yet [to the sad reproach of a sinfull Nation, may it be spoken] none are now adayes more cried up, then such as were never brought up in the Schools

Schools of the Prophets, nor lawfully ordained to the *Ministry*, which is now so commonly slandered by our [7-suited] Sectar-ies, telling the people that their *Priests* have deluded them, that they have falsified the word [which, alas! they themselves have too foully wrested] yea some of them have been pleased to call the greatest cheat could be put upon Christians.

But let the manifest punishment from heaven upon *Vzziah* serve (among many other instances which might be produced) as an example of terror; to such secular Powers, as will incroach upon *Ministry*, and break the barriers that Providence hath established, for the differencing of the spiritual and temporal authority. Neither let the privilege of

of Times (though the barres of impudence seem broken down) be made a colour to excuse any from Sacrilegious boldness, who mingle mysteriously divine reasons with their own humane Fancies, which as Queen, and Governess ought to be chief Ruler, and not suffragant, in so sacred and holy a Subject.

Besides, is it not an unseemly thing to see the sacred volume of our *Belief-mysteries*, tossed up and down, and plaid withall in every shop, or kitching? and that those divine *Oracles* which (heretofore) have been accounted *Mysteries*, should be thus abused, by such as go about sowing of *schism*, setting of *Errors*, and spreading of *faction*. Surely, so serious and venerable a study, should not thus tumultuarily be dis-

discussed, Gods word being a History religiously to be adored, awfully feared, and not fabulously reported.

The *Jews* and *Mahometans*, and almost all Nations, are with reverence wedded unto the bare language wherein their Religion had originally been conceived; all change and translation having been directly forbidden. And one of our *Grecian* Historians, doth (not without appearance of reason) accuse his Age, for so much as the secrets of *Christain* Religion were so farre dispenced in publike, as that every man might at his pleasure dispute of it, and at randome vent his opinion of the same.

And certainly it should be a great shame to us, who by the un-

unspeakable mercy of God enjoy the pure, and sacred *Mysteries* of piety, to suffer the same to be profaned by an erratical and circumforaneous motion, in the mouthes of ignorant and popular people; seeing the very *Gentiles* interdicted *Socrates*, *Plato*, and the wisest among them, to meddle, enquire, or speak of things committed to the Priests of *Delphos*; yea did flatly inhibit among themselves the use of the Name of their god in all their vulgar and familiar discourses.

It was not long since accounted a great fault for *Ministers* to intermeddle with lay-Offices; yet how many of *Jeroboams* Priests have we now started up among us who continue in the civil Calling, yet think themselves able to dis-

charge that of the *Ministry*, not considering that there are no *sins*, which God doth punish more rigorously, nor speedily, then those which are committed, against devotion and piety.

How suddainly did that King finde a Leprosie rise from the high Priests? Yea how was *Ely* the chief Priest buried in the ruines of his own house, for the sacriledge of his children, without any consideration of those long servies which he had performed at the Tabernacle! We find our Saviour also not to take up the scourge against naughty Judges, Usurers, &c. but drives out the buyers and sellers of the Temple, Joh. 2. as if to commit a *sin* against Gods Altar, the remedy would grow desperate; and should therefore warn us, as to keep ourselves from Simonies, from Plunders,

ders, and irreverence in Churches, so from abusing the Ordinances, and worship of God, without a warrantable Call; seeing he can have no excuse, who makes his Judge his witnesse.

He that thus builds without God, doth but demolish; and whosoever thinks this way to make any great encrease, shall finde nothing but sterility. And may not the voice of God hence cry aloud unto us in his Temple, Can my soul participate of your counsels, or my glory come into your company, since whilst you erect Altars to me, you offer your vows to your own lusts? you not sacrifice, but sin, you bend your knees but not your hearts; Deceive not the world, neither make false boastings in my worship, except you manacle your own passi-

passions, and tame your deceitful minds.

We have of late (indeed) gladly beheld the devout multitude crouding the Churches to pour fourth their wishes. How often have we seen the Religious prostrate in the Sanctuary, imploring the aid of heaven by frequent sighs, and importuning divine providence with unwearied prayers? But alas! may not God say unto us [when we are even partaking of his sacred mysteries] how hath the blood of many miserable men been shed, for whom I have shed my blood? whilst you cry to me, do not thousands, of Orphans and widdows cry to behold the dead carcasses of their husbands and parents? you seem to kisse my head, but kick at my members; you flatter me with
your

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your Fastings, but persecute me with Arms. Your swords reek with the blood of one another; you present your selves suppliants before me, but raise contentions abroad. You have the voice of *Jacob*, but the hands of *Esau*; yea, whilest you smell of incense, it is by your means that whole Townes are turned into smোক.

And I wish it may never be laid to the charge of any of their last account, who should have composed the Nation when it was disunited with discords, and endeavored to reconcile the irregular tumults of the Church, that they have abandoned themselves to the infamous Councils of *Machiavel*, and their own self-interests; this being not that wisdom which (to use the words of the Apostle) descendeth from above, but

but is carnal , *sensual* and devilish.

Sythence from hence proceeds the dulling of that *two-edged sword*, which divides between the bones, and the marrow, and by the power whereof blasphemies, sacriledges, heresies , and impieties would have vanished , and all have been scattered ; Laws would not have been silent among swords , the honour and worship of God so much contemned , the hypocrites have the uncontrolled liberty of speaking , poor misled and seduced souls would not have been made believe they sin in not traducing the *Ministry* and their *Calling* , as a humane invention , meerly introduced to uphold carnall interest , nor *Wolves* so dangerously have infected the *Tents* of the shepherds.

Is

Is not this to be wise without God? And doth it not hence also happen that in stead of profiting in the School of *Christ*, and in the Doctrine of so good a Master, we are bold only for the world, and timorous in the affairs of God? If a falshood be to be averred, if a revenge be to be put forward [even to the effusion of blood] If lawful *Powers* be to be refused; if laws both divine and humane be to be spoken against, there wants neither boldness nor confidence; but (though all men are naturally stirred up with the resentment of a *Divinity*) yet emulation doth so often mingle it self with *Religion*, as that some seek their own glory in lifting up that of the *Divinity*, and (contray to the saying of the eternal wisdom it self) accord the devil of *proper interest* with

with the *Maximes* of *Jesus*, by
serving two Masters.

And doth it not proceed from
the false and scandalous lives of
such professors, that the minds
of pious people are offended, that
the sad harmony of our enemies
jubilations is? See how they dis-
agree and destroy one another!
and the scolding tongues of the
notoriously wicked are sharpened
against our *Religion*; that we are
made gazing stocks to others, and
are become formidable to our
selves; whereas, would we but
make God to march in the head
of our affairs, who is the source
of all good successes, how soon
would Religion deface the spots
which so easily slide into our
lives!

Surely either the *Religion* we
pro-

professe accuseth our *errors*, or
 else we the Professors accuse our
Religion. Where *Christ* is ba-
 nished, Love finds no habitation;
 and needs must there be a heap
 of gross *impieties*, where there is
 an oblivion of the greatest *mer-*
cies; needs must our *Errors* turn
 to *heresies*, when they are practi-
 sed by design, and obstinacy, and
 overtake us not by surprize, but
 possesse us with a resolute opini-
 on against the decisions of the
 Church. Are not these *spots in*
our Feasts, seeming rather to be
 the actings of men exiled from
 God, and lawlesse in the world,
 and of such as (through the heat
 of a mistaken *zeal*) think to meet
Jesus among the engagements
 and pursuit of worldly *interests*,
 who is onely to be found in the
 Temple, in his Ordinances, and
 the communion of his Saints?

E

Here

Here onely is the Sanctuary of rest, where wearied souls may lay their heads; here shall we be sure to meet with comfortable embraces, and from his mouth (whose Laws are established upon foundations stronger then the Pillars of heaven, and earth) shall we receive the excellent *Promises*, and clearest Revelations of *eternity*. And when men have once left this *Truth* [their onely quiet home] they will take up their lodging [all *errors* being near of kin] under any root or opinion which hath the least shadow of probability; such an ignorant zeal being too blind to go right, and too active to stand still, and like *rasa tabula* or unsealed wax, ready to take any impression.

And however some may possibly pretend holiness towards God,
for

for the setting up of their En-
sings as signs in the midst of
Gods Sanctuary, and for the break-
ing down at once the carved work
thereof with axes and hammers,
Psal. 74. 4, 6. and at last root up
all that they may take the Houses
of God into their own possession,
and like brutish dogs, fall upon
Gods Priests, that they may have
the greatest share in the plunder-
ing of their means; yet surely,
this their pretended goodness
seems but as the morning cloud,
and as the early dew will passe a-
way, Hos. 6. 4. seeing the staves
of Beauty are hereby broken in
pieces, and the entire bands of
Christian Truth, Order, and
Peace, quite cut asunder, even
to the making shipwreck of
faith and a good conscience, and
the extream hazard of our im-
mortal souls.

O let us not thus be flattered into a security of our excesses, since the whole head is sick, the whole heart is heavy, and nothing is safe, nothing is pleasant among such calamities, where the worst of evils is the rejoycing, and where the eyes of *Truth* have been of late put out by the dust and rubbish which hath been made through the fall of so great and ancient a Fabrick!

And who ere they be that strive against the peaceable wishes of the Church, by railing at, reviling, and undermining the pillars thereof, by reproaching their persons, deerying their office, by abating, and exclaiming against their maintenance, by supporting and countenancing Errors and heresies, before their wholesomer Doctrine; and whereby to ruin them

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them and their Religion (by making a wide gap for blasphemy, Atheism and prophaneness) let them also take heed, least some grievous hand fall upon them from heaven; and that (meeting with unhappy events in all their undertakings) their life becomes not troublesome, and their death not doubtful.

If we consult with history, how various are the examples on either hand, we shall not onely find a busie *Achitophel* paid the just wages of his Traiterous Counsels with an infamous halter; We shall not onely finde *Alexander* (who thrust his souldiers into Battels beyond the progresse of the Sunne, and the limits of the Sea) to perish by poison from his own Domesticks; neither *Hannibal* alone (who so long

weaved the inextricable web of war) to shorten the date of his contempts with voluntary poyson; but surely all those who thus think to please themselves in an ill-rectified devotion and formal profession, will prove no other than barren Trees, which make a great noise, and never beare fruit. And how sad will their account be, who thus prick their fingers whilst they are gathering of *Roses*? How sad will it be with us, when we shall [for thus betraying the most *holy things*] curse the womb that bare us, and the breasts that gave us suck; the Church that Christened us, and the Minister that Catechized us; and when we shall bestrew the day that ever we heard a good Sermon? Alas that our misery should be heightened from our *means* of being once happy! That we should bewail
our

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our very knowledge, and repent us
even of our *Grace*!

O how will they then blush,
when that (*Jer. 23. 24.*) God (who
fills heaven and earth) shall have
a Candle in every mans bosom
[even their own consciences] who
strive to make their *sins* look ver-
tuously, by making them well-fa-
voured, who embrace *schism* un-
der the notion of *Truth*, and too
often take complexion for *Reli-
gion*? will it not be easier for the
Gentiles which know not God,
than such as thus worship him? O
strange delusion to take the great-
est vice for the greatest virtue!
all the out-side of our godlinesse
this way rendring us but the worse
before God!

Heresie [the key of *Atheism*]
may for a time (indeed) make

E 4.

arrows

arrows of any wood, to hit the marks of their interest, and like a fawning servant, be ever ready to observe his Masters will in such ill offices wherein his own advantage concurrerh: Though all at last will be consumed like Abortives in their birth, and no otherwifc ftead them than as Woods and Forests shelter Theeves, only to cover their crimes.

Since he that this way thinks to pacifie *Divine* Majesty, infenseth it; He that with *Saul* offers up the golden mountajns of impiety and injustice, doth but offer to God the Sacrifices of disobedience, which defile rather then adorn the Altars of God, seeing they onely garnish the ambition of man. But as peaceable dispositions sometimes surfet of rest, because the natural inclination to change,

change, makes felicity it self to become tedious; so troublesome heads alwayes account quietnesse their greatest enemy, no way considering that our approach to God ought to be a fixed, a purposed and settled Action, to which our heart should be ever so solemnly adjoynd; neither ought he to be commixed with any of our *Actions* but with an awfull reverence, and attention full of horror and respect.

And though there are many *Endymions* to be found who embrace the Moon, whose hearts are ever and anon wheeling about in endlesse Labyrinths, surcharged with changeable fancies, and whose spirits are perpetually attended with turbulencies, and gnawn with the itch of novelty; yet let all our ends and endear-

vors be recollected in God as beams
in the Sun.

It is the nature of Quick-silver
to tremble up and down, and ne-
ver leaveth untill it hath found
gold wherewith to mingle; so the
heart of man boundeth and leap-
eth here and there in all its trou-
bles and disturbances, there
being nothing but ebbs and
flows, untill such time as it is
united to its Creatour (the Tem-
ple of all repose.) And let all
such know who seem to catch the
world with a hook, who rejoyce
in their own crime as if it were
a vertue, and make Sacrifices
with the instruments of mischief,
who judge of happiness by the
multitude of Preys, and acknow-
ledge no other God but their
good fortune, that however they
think to prosper in their own i-
magi-

maginations, and worldly affairs, being yet inwardly disunited from the eternal wisdom of God, they are no other than *Icarusses* who seek to counterfeit Birds with waxen wings; the least ray proceeding from the throne of heaven, being able to burn them, and make their heighth serve to no other use than to render their fall the more remarkable; or like the golden precipices of *Heliogabalus* which were not devised but to make his *ruine* the more memorable.

It is said, the very feathers of the Eagle are so imperious that they will not mix with the Plumage of other Birds, without consuming them; and shall we think to mingle God, who is an incomprehensible wisdom, a riches inexhaustible, and a purity infinite,

nite, with our feeble pretension, which have frenzy for beginnings, misery for inheritance, and impurity for ornament?

If we are not to appropriate to our selves sacred Gold nor Silver, neither to transferre to prophane uses what hath been dedicated to God (as we find exprested both in Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws) how do we offend God (who hath granted us a Spirit of Gold, yea (I may say) a heart of Gold, when he washed and regenerated us by the spirit of Baptism) when we therewith mingle the weak *fancies* of our own brain! And how far are we from rendring to God what is due to him, when we make use of our heart as a vessel of abomination, fraughting it with the Chimeraes of our fond imaginations, and planting no-
thing

thing therein, but the petty interests of our own glory, and ambitious humors, as an Altar whereon we daily present the best part of our sacrifice!

We find that the worst of Tyrants, *Mezentius* could finde no greater cruelty on earth then to tie a dead body to a living; and shall we fasten thoughts of our dead and languishing minde with God who is nothing but life and truth? Surely, its high time for us to leave the giddy fancies of the world, to behold Beauties and lights of divine glory, unless we mean to Register our defects in the Calander of eternity. Shall we prescribe limits to the Almighty? shall we thus lay continual siege unto his power by our own weak reasons [no better then dreams, or vanity?] or shall

shall we subject the *Idea's* of him who hath made both us and our knowledge, to the vain and weak appearances of our understanding?

Quid juvat hoc?

Orbita interris anima & caelestium inanes!

What do we herein lesse, than amuse the curiosity of our mind, by seeking to feed it with gnawing the raw bones of our own inventions?

Let us no longer then make warre against heaven, nor detract from Gods glory, by preferring our own *Fancies* to his prejudice. Religion (like the Universe, all the members whereof mutually love and embrace) is united and collected within it
self

self; how ought we then to take heed of dis-joynting it through *Eklyse*, and the disordinate love of our own wild and wavering conceits, which carry with them so much of infidelity, of contempt of God, yea of down right *Athism*! Yea which ordinarily makes our best seeming performances, the more detestable by insinuating with such subtilties, and pretexes of holiness, as if it were most devout, this being not only a simple Tyranny, but a sacrilege, and (through its exorbitance) descendeth to the worst of deformities!

Surely, if through our weakness we once corrupt and adulterate the essence of Truth; Oh into what a point of presumptuous insolency will not our blindnesse carry us? How shall we sooth our selves

selves into some illumination, which will really prove but an egregious dotage? and thereby so involve our selves in a mist, and grope in the dark, as if *Truth* were gotten into some dungeon, which our shallow apprehensions could not fathom.

Its but vain to implore Gods power in a bad cause. Man ought to have an unpolluted soul, and absolutely free from all vicious passions (at least wise) in that moment he addresseth himself unto him; otherwise we our selves present him the rods to whip us withall; and instead of redressing our fault, we redouble the same, by presenting him with such affections as are fraught with sin and irreverence, to whom only we should sue for grace and forgiveness.

If

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If we pretend good, to do mischief, and act the devils part in the attire of an Angel, what do we other then foster the crime and the Judge in one and the same Mansion?

And what is this but to lend nothing to devotion, but what might flatter our Passions, and even make that Religion to shrowd and foster our vices, which it was ordained to root out? Surely he that thus calls God for his assistance, while he is engulfed in *sinne*, doth but like the *Thief* which called *Justice* for his aide, or those that produce Divine Providence in witness of a lye.

Let us no longer dare then to burn incense upon that Altar, to which we have no lawfull call;
for

for which we finde a good Prince [otherwise] to carry the spots of his too much forwardnesse to his grave. Our heart being ruled, and our soul commanded by faith, reason will-eth that we draw all other parts to the service of God, according to their best power and faculty. Our *sinnes*, though naturally tending downward as to their centre, do (through the too much preferring of our own inventions in Gods worship, before his holy prescriptions) mount upwards by their cry; nothing but our *sighs* and prayers being left us (as the best counterounds) to drown their noise, that God may not hear them; and the pleading merits of our *Saviour*, with the loved language of his blood, being the best way to silence the loudness

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ness of their cry, and divert the
Judgement (otherwise) inevitably
attending them.

FINIS.
